(b) whether it is a fact that Railways has incurred heavy loss for providing refreshments to railway passengers since last so many years as Railways does not offer any subsidy thereon;

(c) if so, the details of reasons therefor; and

(d) the details of steps taken or proposed to be taken for providing quality and fresh refreshments to railway passengers at ostensible price by avoiding losses thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) There are about 468 long distance Mail/Express trains which presently do not have pantry car and approximately 250 Mail/Express trains including Rajdhani/Shatabdi trains, are running with Pantry Cars.

(b) and (c) Based on costing methodology, losses have been incurred by Indian Railways on catering services as a whole. This is mainly due to the reason that total cost of catering services, which *inter-alia* includes running cost of pantry car and terminal cost of both pantry cars and stationary units, is more than earnings from these services.

(d) In order to provide quality and fresh refreshments at reasonable price with a view to avoid losses, Indian Railways Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) has been set up to upgrade, professionalise and manage the catering service and upgrade the quality of food and earnings. Refreshment Rooms, Automatic Vending Machines, Food Plazas and Stalls have been established through reputed and experienced caterers. Regular and surprise checks are conducted by officials of Railways/IRCTC to monitor quality/quantity/tariff of catering services. Licences are being awarded through two packet open tender system on competitive bidding basis in which a minimum of 12% of sales turnover is fixed as floor price and licence is awarded to the highest bidder. Sales of units are assessed realistically to avoid losses to Railways.

Rail accident at Datia

1925. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA:
SHRI LALIT SURI:
SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Gwalior bound Bundelkhand Express jumped off tracks

and crashed into a signal cabin near Datia railway station on 3rd October, 2005;

(b) the number of persons who lost their lives and those who were injured as a result thereof alongwith the number out of them who were passers by, in addition to passengers and railway employees;

(c) whether any *ex-gratia* payment has been made in respect of all those affected separately;

(d) whether an inquiry into the mishap has been held; and

(e) if so, the findings thereof and action taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) yes, Sir. In this unfortunate accident 13 persons (11 passengers and 2 Railway Staff) lost their lives, 11 persons (9 passengers and 2 Railway staff) were grievously injured and 25 passengers sustained simple injuries.

(c) An *ex-gratia* relief of Rs. 1 lakh was announced, out of which Rs. 15,000/- has been made to the each case of grievously injured passengers and grievously injured railway employees as well. *Ex-gratia* payment of Rs. 5,000/- has been paid to all the passengers who sustained simple injuries except one.

(d) and (e) As per provisional findings contained in Preliminary Report of Commissioner of Railway Safety, North Eastern Circle the accident occurred due to non application of brakes resulting in the train running through sand hump though starter signal for down loop line was showing red aspect being a stopping station.

Inadequate fund for rail projects in Kerala

1926. SHRI K. CHANDRAN PILLAI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the inadequate fund allocation to various railway projects in the State of Kerala is hampering the progress of these projects;

(b) if so, the details of projects of which work has been delayed due to the above reason, project-wise; and

(c) the details of steps taken to rectify the same?